Operation Red Alert believes that through building an army of good fathers, informed mothers, and empowered girls and boys, we can create safe, trafficking-free villages. We believe that a coalition effort is essential, and that together, we can end large-scale trafficking by 2025.
OPERATION RED ALERT operates in 5 states that historically hold among the highest risk of human trafficking in the country. These are the states that NGOs and local anti human trafficking units confirm are some of the highest risk source areas for girls being trafficked into forced sexual slavery. Prevention in these states is crucial. Maharshtra was added as the fifth and newest state in which Operation Red Alert is working towards prevention. We have moved into the state with the strategic partnership of Save the Children India who are assisting in not just implementation but also monitoring and evaluation. The mission of coalition-lead prevention is becoming a reality throughout India, and we are grateful to our partners for leading this movement with us.

“Thank you for training our NGO and giving us the opportunity to do the Safe Village Program in the state of Maharashtra. There are many trafficking prone villages that are in need of this program!”

SANTOSH RAUT - ABHINAV BHARAT SAMAJ SEVA MANDAL
“A great opportunity has been provided to us through the Safe Village Program to create awareness among children and elders about sex trafficking. We are very proud of this partnership with Operation Red Alert, and will put in all our effort to reach the goal of ending sex trafficking by 2025.”

Prasad Uddandrao - Vidya Foundation
Rakshak states partners rakshaks trained

Educating at-risk families and girls about trafficking has had an incredible impact already. Calls to the Red Alert Helpline are increasing, and we are receiving more stories of individual village members taking action to combat human trafficking themselves. The stories in this report give a snapshot of a changing reality that is just the “tip of the iceberg” of the impact of prevention education being delivered where it is needed most.

Yet, we know that in order to achieve the long-term goals of the Safe Village Program – to successfully change mindsets and create allies to the mission of keeping girls safe – multiple interventions are required.

For this reason, in 2017 Operation Red Alert launched a brand new initiative to provide long-term support for girls in high-risk villages. This initiative is called the Rakshak Program. Rakshak literally means “protector” in Hindi. A Rakshak is a local man or woman, who lives and works in a village targeted by the Safe Village Program, and who has a personal passion for ensuring that their village stays safe. A Rakshak becomes an ally for girls’ safety, committed to being vigilant about risks that girls in the village face, and to reporting any suspicious incidents to the local Implementing Partner and/or Red Alert Helpline.

It is critical that a Rakshak is mature enough to overcome the biases triggered by harmful social norms and traditions, and to be the voice to speak out for girls when issues like child-marriage arise. Operation Red Alert actively equips each Rakshak with ongoing training and capacity-building that makes them not only a capable ally for girls’ safety, but also indispensable as a resource to adults in the village.

The Rakshak program has been piloted in 4 states, and with 20 Implementing Partners. We currently have 106 trained Rakshaks through whom we are piloting the program and tailoring it for country-wide roll out in late 2018.
The Red Alert Helpline remains the only dedicated helpline in India addressing Human Sex Trafficking. We are getting more calls than ever, and now have more partners to support the cases we receive through it. The helpline is supported in 6 languages, covering all the major languages of the states in which we operate.

The Red Alert helpline receives many calls of verification, thank you’s, and non-trafficking case reports. Our team handles each call its due importance, even if it is “just” a call to say thank you or to verify that someone would respond. We look at every call as an opportunity to instill trust among stakeholders in the work and the mission of Operation Red Alert. Our helpline responders know that a simple call for verification can easily lead to a case report down the road. Every call impacts perceptions of grassroots stakeholders on the programs and the local Implementing Partners.

We receive many non-trafficking cases, and are able to respond to them by activating the support of our local Implementing Partners and their network organisations. While non-trafficking cases can be perceived as outside of our mandate of operations, we do not treat them that way. Every case of domestic violence, child marriage and missing children (in particular) is followed through until the best possible resolution. Domestic violence is a critical push factor, causing girls to be vulnerable to running away from or willingly leaving home with a stranger. Child marriage is one of the most common tactics that traffickers use to lure families into letting young girls go. Our Implementing and Strategic partners have worked together to resolve domestic violence, locate and rescue missing children, stop child marriages, counsel parents on keeping children in school, and so much more.

The Operation Red Alert Helpline represents a coalition of do-anything partners who are committed to the safety of girls, and the reduction of vulnerabilities of their families. Together, we are providing assistance to thousands who have no other options for recourse. What an honour it is to be working together to impact thousands of lives.
NOTES TO MY FATHER

The world’s 1st live action Virtual Reality documentary on sex trafficking was viewed for the first time in January 2017, at Sundance Film Festival. It went on to make its World Premiere at SXSW Film Festival, followed by a world tour at international film festivals, events, conferences, and more. It was shown at the SKOLL Forum in Oxford, and at Trust Conference in London, and it achieved an incredible response from each person who was immersed in the powerful story of Ramadevi and her father Kullyappa.

The film won the UN Women Film Festival Award for Best 360/VR Film.

The film has been viewed over 340,000 times on Facebook alone since being made public in September 2017. The story, which emphasizes the importance of good fathers and keeping girls in school has captured the hearts of individuals and media alike. If you haven’t seen the film yet - watch it now on Facebook or YouTube, or any of the major VR platforms.

**Notes to My Father**

BOLLYWOOD actor and crowdfunding platform founder Kunal Kapoor wrote a spoken word poem on sex trafficking and used it as the campaign video for a fundraising for Operation Red Alert. The video was viewed nearly 454,000 times, and was unequivocally well received. Crucially, the video succeeded in confronting passive acceptance of commercial sexual exploitation by spurring empathy for the hidden pain of lost innocence, and severed family bonds. The campaign is an exciting example of how we are working to put India on Red Alert to end sex trafficking in our own backyard!

**ESOMAR Foundation & Partners** - In 2016, the Red Alert Research Paper won the most prestigious global award for market research - the ESOMAR Excellence Award. In 2017, ESOMAR invited us back to their annual Congress to present on the impact of our research in a segment dedicated to learning about social-impact of their field. Ahead of the Congress, ESOMAR Foundation received a very generous donation from AOL’s OATH program to run a banner ad. ESOMAR Foundation partnered with System1 to create the ad campaign, and chose our research paper to base the campaign on. Here’s what John Kearon, CEO of System1 said about working on the campaign -

“THEIR WORK REPRESENTED RESEARCH AT ITS BEST — AND WE DECIDED TO TRANSLATE ITS NNIANCED AND COMPLEX FINDINGS INTO A CAMPAIGN THAT WOULD GRAB PEOPLE EMOTIONALLY AND RAISE BOTH AWARENESS AND MONEY.”

**ESOMAR Awards**

- 2 AWARDS
- 3 MAJOR VR PLATFORMS
- 343,692 SOCIAL VIEWS

**ESOMAR Foundation**

- 459,834 VIEWS
- ₹ 68,775 INR MONEY RAISED

**ESOMAR Congress**

- 1,000+ VIEWED THE LIVE STREAM
- 1,200+ ATTENDEES
Dr. Elca Grobler received a standing ovation from over 3,000 attendees at India's flagship TEDx event. The talk was painstakingly crafted to highlight solutions that both men and women can share in, and to challenge India to think about the power of an "Army of Good Fathers." The positivity that her TEDx talk received exceeded all expectations, with men in particular sharing their support. The video has so far received nearly 3,000 views on Facebook and YouTube! Eliminating violence and exploitation about women and girls is an “idea worth spreading” indeed!

3,000 ATTENDEES

2,815 ONLINE VIDEO VIEWS

*AS OF DECEMBER 2017

Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi has called for a war on child sexual abuse. To kickstart the movement, he organized the Bharat Yatra, an 11,000km (6,385 mile) walk across 22 states of India with local events in each major city. The Yatra came through our home city of Hyderabad where the Operation Red Alert team helped organize and spoke at the city's rally. The Yatra sparked enormous conversation in India about the importance of children’s safety and rights. Each step taken was dedicated to #MakeIndiaSafe.

10,000,000 TOTAL PLEDGES

35 DAYS

On 19th-20th August, 2017 over 22,000 people ran in the Airtel Hyderabad Marathon. The Marathon selected 47 NGOs to partner with to turn the race into a run for a reason. My Choices Foundation received support from 41 new unique donors, and raised a total of Rs.40,983 to go towards the Safe Village Program. The support came in organically, without a separate campaign to drive traffic to the donations page, encouraging our team that our mission is as inspiring to others as it is to us.
At Operation Red Alert, our aim is to unify the voice of the anti-trafficking community. The only way to do this is to build a coalition of NGOs who are willing to work together with a shared mission and vision.

We will never be able to curb this evil alone. Activists, NGOs, academics, private sector, government and citizens have to come together as a strong coalition to fight the largest criminal network in the world - the traffickers of human beings.

WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT IT’S NOT ABOUT WHO GETS THE CREDIT, IT’S ABOUT HOW MANY LITTLE GIRLS WE CAN KEEP SAFE!

An implementing partner is a grassroots NGO that has received training from Operation Red Alert on the Safe Village Program, and is equipped with the resources to run it in their area of operations. Each Implementing Partner dedicates between 2 - 6 team members to the Safe Village Program, and conducts a minimum of 3 programs per month.

Network Forum

In 2017 Operation Red Alert launched its first Anti-Human Trafficking Network Forum event. This partnership-building gathering will be held semi-annually going forward. The first Network Forum took place in August in Kolkata. More than 80 NGOs from in and around West Bengal participated, and each one took a pledge to work together to end human trafficking and modern day slavery.

Quantium helps us in prioritizing our intervention in vulnerable areas for a better impact. They have also built a mobile-based reporting tool to help simplify all our partner's and field worker's reporting needs.

Quantium Technology Partner

We have partnered with Quantium, a big data analytics company, that has built a technology-based ecosystem to identify high-risk hotspots for trafficking.

72 Implementing Partners

10+ Strategic Partners

A Strategic Partner is an NGO that is committed to the coalition effort, and is committed to providing support to cases of human trafficking reported through the Red Alert Helpline. We are proud to partner with heroes in the anti-trafficking field, and together, help lead the joint effort to combat human trafficking.

A Strategic Partner is an NGO that is committed to the coalition effort, and is committed to providing support to cases of human trafficking reported through the Red Alert Helpline. We are proud to partner with heroes in the anti-trafficking field, and together, help lead the joint effort to combat human trafficking.

The Freedom Collaborative

The Freedom Collaborate is a joint initiative by Liberty Asia and Chab Dai, and does just what the name states. It is a platform that fosters collaboration for freedom fighters. Operation Red Alert is proud to have become a regional partner, helping Freedom Collaborative connect Indian NGOs with the platform and all the resources it offers. So far, we have helped 40 grassroots NGOs connect with Freedom Collaborative, and we look forward to assisting many more connect with the amazing resources that the platform makes available.
15 year old Gousia dreams of becoming a teacher so that she can “guide children” while they are growing up. Her father passed away a few years ago, and ever since that time Gousia’s mother, elder sister, and brother-in-law pressured her to get married.

When Gousia finished her 10th grade, her family forced her to end her education, and began arranging her marriage. She refused the idea saying “I will not get married, because I have to finish my education to be a teacher”. No one listened to her. They were more concerned with finding Gousia a husband who could take care of her.

Gousia’s friend Usha promised she would help her get out of the forced marriage. Usha had attended the Operation Red Alert Safe Village Program (SVP), and had learned about how to be a Guardian Girl. Guardian Girls look out for other girls, and make sure they stay in school. She knew what to do if a girl in her village was being forced to get married instead of go to school. Usha built up the courage to call the Red Alert Helpline. The call was directed to local Implementing Partner FMMSSS, who had been the partner to conduct the SVP in their village.

FMMSSS showed up in their village, intervened and stopped the marriage. They made sure that Gousia was admitted back into school, starting her new year in 11th grade (called college in India). They counseled Gousia’s family, and made them aware that marrying Gousia at the age of 15 would not only limit her options in life, but would also be breaking the law. Her family knows that if Gousia is forced to quit school to get married, that they will be reported to the police.

Gousia says “now my dreams of becoming a teacher will come true thanks to my friend Usha, who is my Guardian Girl!”.

A NOTE ON EARLY MARRIAGE AND TRAFFICKING:
Marriage is one of the most common guises that traffickers use to trick their victims and victim’s families. It is common for a trafficker to invest substantial resources into faking a marriage in order to traffick a girl. Operation Red Alert treats every case of child and early marriage that is reported to our helpline like a potential trafficking case. Stopping a child marriage means more than preventing a girl from a marriage that puts her at risk of poor health, childbearing complications and higher susceptibility to domestic violence. It also eliminates the possibility of her being trafficked into a much worse fate.
Saidul is a father of three daughters and two sons. They belong to a poor minority community in Kuldia village. Saidul and his wife work in the unskilled agriculture sector as a daily wage laborer. Both of them are illiterate, and unable to pursue better opportunities. They have a MGNREGA job card, but it only helps them with around 100 days of employment per year. Their resources are unpredictable, and they find it very difficult to support their family.

The Aila cyclone, which took place in 2009, damaged Saidul’s village in ways they are still recovering from. Many families from his area arrange their daughter’s marriage with people they do not know, who do not live in their village, hoping to secure their daughter’s future and to make it easier to provide for the rest of the family.

When a neighbor woman came to Saidul and brought a marriage proposal for his 16-year-old daughter Rabia* from a man in Delhi, Saidul thought it was a good opportunity for his girl. The neighbor said the man was a successful business person, who would look after Rabia well. “I thought that Rabia would be happy, and would get at least two meals per day” said Saidul.

Preparations were nearly underway for their marriage, despite the family never having met the man in person. Then, on 15th of June, 2017 Operation Red Alert Implementing Partner, HASUS, conducted a Safe Village Program in Saidul’s village. Saidul learned about human trafficking, trafficker’s modes of operation, and how thousands of adolescent girls go missing each year, including from their own district. They learned about the mental and physical consequences of child marriage on young girls and boys, and that it is illegal for a girl under 18 to be married. They also learned that traffickers purposefully target illiterate and economically poor families, knowing they are more susceptible to their tricks.

Saidul says that the SVP was his eye opener. Immediately after the program, he went home and spoke to his wife about what he learnt, and the possible consequences of getting Rabia married to the man in Delhi. Both of them agreed that the marriage must be stopped, so their daughter would stay safe.

When Saidul informed the neighbor woman who helped arrange the marriage that they did not want to go through with it, she pushed them to reconsider. For several days, she continued to visit their house and urge Saidul to make the decision for his daughter’s happiness. Finally, Saidul told her that if she visited them again they would inform the local police station and call the Red Alert helpline. Only then did the woman stop harassing Saidul. Saidul and the local Implementing Partner who conducted the SVP suspected this woman could be a broker for a local trafficking ring, a fact that was later confirmed when they discovered she is associated with other girls going missing and never being heard from again. If Saidul had sent Rabia to be married, they almost certainly would never have heard from her again.

Now Saidul is a self motivated activist, like many others in this village who were a part of the SVP. He said, “I am a lucky person in this village, because I got the opportunity to attend the meeting, which helped me save my daughter’s life and save her from human trafficking.”

According to ORA Implementing Partner, HASUS, “At present hundreds of educated and motivated fathers are living in these villages, and are proactively working against child marriage. Through their active involvement, incidences of child marriage and missing children cases have been significantly reducing in these vulnerable villages.”
15-year-old Mithali was returning from her usual computer class in southern West Bengal when a fellow student introduced himself to her. He was at least 7 years older, but he gave her a lot of attention. They quickly became friends, and eventually she was seeing him after class every day. One day, he offered her a sweet lassi (yoghurt drink), and the next thing she remembers was waking up in Delhi over a thousand kilometers away from home. Her “friend” had laced her drink with a sedative. She doesn’t know how she got there, but when she regained consciousness, she was locked up in a room in a place she had never seen before. She soon discovered that her boyfriend had sold her to a brothel.

A few days after she went missing, Operation Red Alert’s Implementing Partner, BBSS, conducted a Safe Village Program (SVP) in Mithali’s village. Upendra, Mithali’s brother, was at the program. Distressed about Mithali being missing, he took the opportunity to report her case to the BBSS team. Though Upendra and his family had reported Mithali’s missing to the police, they hadn’t received any help.

BBSS was able to mobilize the police to conduct an investigation. Eventually, they found her in Delhi. She was immediately rescued and moved to a safe home in Delhi, then sent home to West Bengal to be with her family. She was gone for about 3 months, but her family says that it felt like an eternity. There was no joy at home while she was missing.

Now, Mithali is back in school, and joy has returned to her family. She is in 11th grade, doing well, and dreaming of what she will achieve after her schooling. Her family, especially her big brother, are proud of their courageous girl who exudes happiness and confidence.

**A note on men and boys: Operation Red Alert firmly believes that men and boys have at least 50% part in the solution to ending trafficking - in some cases, even more. Fathers make decisions for their daughter’s futures, brothers look out for the safety of their sisters, and men are often responsible for the governing of a village. Men and boys are much needed allies in the effort to put an end to sex trafficking. Together, we can create a respectful and safe society for women and girls.**
Many "colleagues" in the cause ask me about what indications we use to measure the success of our village-level interventions. The metrics of success that are most widely accepted are: the reduction of trafficking cases; the reduction of child abuse cases; and the increase in calls to the Red Alert Helpline reporting trafficking and missing children.

For me, however, it is the real experiences from the high-risk villages we have conducted the program in that form the core part of my definition of success. When I see the grateful faces of the school girls thanking me for the program, I know how much our efforts mean. No amount of data could tell the story of impact as effectively as the gratitude of these little girls. The only negative response to our program was when we are asked "why didn't you come sooner". Facing the evil of sex trafficking can be discouraging. Despite all our efforts, we are often shocked at how far there is to go, how much there is to learn, and how difficult it is to affect change. What keeps me going and gives me hope is the time I spend with girls like 13-year-old Nilaya Patil. I met Nilaya at her school in Dadpur Village in Maharashtra. When I and the team first arrived at her school, the children looked skeptical because their teachers hadn't prepared them for the session. Once we got started our program with fun activities, the children's faces lit up with joy. Nilaya was particularly well engaged and excited about the program. We ask the children to share the learnings from the session with their parents.

Later in the day, as we held meetings with groups of mothers and fathers, Nilaya and her friends followed us around, watching each program from a distance. During the multimedia presentation in the evening, Nilaya showed up early and then acted like a principal, making sure all the other kids were sitting down and staying quiet so that the program would be undisturbed. On the second day of the Save Village Program, we go back to the school to ask the children about their parent's response to the program. Little Nilaya shared that her father had promised her that he would not marry her off early, but would send her for higher studies. She told me, "Thank you for coming. Now we know that we girls are very valuable, and that each of us has a responsibility to keep each other safe. I'm so happy you came all the way with comic books to teach us and our parents how to keep us safe."

These are the moments, when we personally experience and connect with the impact of our work, that drive us to train more partners, reach more villages, conduct Safe Village Programs, train Rakshaks, and keep expanding the Red Alert Helpline. All our efforts are made in effort to keep these precious girls safe.

Staying on top of trends and remaining agile in our approach to end trafficking is essential if we are to combat the traffickers and put an end to their work. We must do more than keep up with their ever-evolving tactics. Operation Red Alert works with over 80 partners across India, with whom we are always learning. In the past year, a report was published by International Justice Mission (IJM). The significant finding of their report was that the number of minors being exploited in red light areas has drastically dropped. What is more important than this exceptional drop, however, is the reason why.

While it is more difficult than ever to find a minor girl in one of India’s red light district brothels, it does not mean that there are fewer of them being exploited. Human trafficking is such a lucrative business that the traffickers are able to earn more and more profit taking less and less risk. Across India, commercial sex exploitation is slowly moving underground, into the private domain. Brothels are being abandoned and traffickers are moving their slaves to upscale lodges, homes in quiet residential areas, communities with high elderly population, and other areas known for safety. It used to be fairly common to spot a young girl working in a red light area. Their presence in specific areas made it much easier to investigate and organize raids to rescue them. Now, it is nearly impossible to locate these girls.

While rescue operations and the process for sustained freedom that follows will always be a critical part of providing justice to survivors, it is not an effective deterrent to the traffickers. We have to invest our efforts where children are vulnerable. We know that the battlefield for freedom is in the rural villages, urban slums, and urban adolescent hotspots where minor aged children are being trafficked in the open. Simply because their communities do not know how to protect them. Operation Red Alert is on a mission to create Safe Villages and Communities by putting them on Red Alert. Will you join us?
I have no brothers, sisters, cousins, neighbours, teachers. I am no daughter, sister.

I tie no friendship bands, yet I am wanted - by men. Was born naked but wrapped in clothes to deceive me. My pictures in the natal form on each laptop. Me moved from lap to lap, a dressed chicken, they go straight for my legs. Love chocolates, lollipops ice creams, but they come as a package deal.

My mom too graduated in complete silence from innocence to guilt. Her mom? I’ll never know.

My story grows with each pat, my baby smell lost to the stench of adulthood.

Hear other children laugh, but I make the Kookaburra cry. Alzheimer’s cannot erase the invasion of a thousand fingers, I cannot lift even one.

The world is divided into men and women. Men whose delicacy is baby women.

“PULLING DROWNING PEOPLE OUT OF A RIVER IS COMPASSION. JUSTICE IS WALKING UPSTREAM TO SOLVE THE REASONS THEY ARE FALLING IN.”

- DAVID BATSTONE
Thank you to our technology partner, Quantium, for their dedication and passion to our work and for building the systems that enable us to effectively measure the impact of our work - we are truly grateful!

To each donor - whether individual, CSR, or grant-maker - who partnered with us financially: Thank you for believing in My Choices Foundation and the work we do. You have helped impact thousands of lives through your generous support of our programs.

We give a special thank you to the Police for working alongside My Choices Foundation in our quest to empower women and girls, and keep them safe. India is seeing real change, and the police are playing a big part in creating this new reality.

We are deeply thankful for each and every person that have joined us in this journey!

Thank you

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WE BELIEVE IN COALITION BUILDING.

If you passionate about ending violence, abuse and exploitation against women, then join the movement to end it! Whether it be through partnership, funding or volunteering, there is so much you can do.